

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

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MARKEY QUESTIONS LOY AND DHS ON FAILURE TO PHYSICALLY SCREEN CARGO ON PASSENGER PLANES

Lawmaker Raises Questions on Aviation, LNG, and Nuclear Power Security at Homeland Security Hearing

WASHINGTON, DC - Representative Edward Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, plans to address the issue of cargo security, among other important security issues such as Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and nuclear power plant security today at a hearing with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials. Rep. Markey has long been critical of DHS's unwillingness to physically screen cargo on passenger airplanes and has introduced legislation, the Universal Screening of Cargo Act (USA Cargo Act, HR 2455) to address the gaping loophole in our aviation security system.

Rep. Markey plans to ask questions about the following DHS cargo security initiatives:

- Al Qaeda continues to place commercial airliners at the top of their terrorist target list. Shouldn't all airports and airliners should remain on the highest level of alert?
- Shouldn't the highest threat levels force the Transportation Security Administration to physically inspect all cargo placed on passenger airlines to ensure they do not contain radiological, biological, chemical or explosive devices?
- Although the Department of Homeland Security claimed that the technology did not exist to screen cargo in a July 2003 letter from Under-Secretary Hutchinson to Sen. Thad Cochran, it seems that TSA in January 2004 submitted a request for proposals (RFP) to companies for "commercial-off-the-shelf" cargo screening technologies. Is the Department claiming that we went from ZERO technologies to screen cargo, to technology that could be found readily and technology that is in fact, already being sold? If not, why has it taken so long for the TSA to submit such an RFP?
- How many technologies have been certified by TSA for inspecting cargo? (If none – when will technologies be certified? What will the technology need to demonstrate in order to be certified?)

Rep. Markey also plans to address LNG and nuclear power plant security issues:

- Considerable costs are associated with security LNG shipments into densely populated urban areas like the City of Everett, Massachusetts, just outside Boston. Does the DHS plan to reimburse the local first responders for their extra resources such as overtime during times of heightened alert?
- What is the current state of alert at nuclear power plants and what is the status of local evacuation plans for communities surrounding these terrorist targets?

Additional information is available at Rep. Markey's website, <http://www.house.gov/markey>.

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